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Diana T Fritz 12/06/2006 03:11:47 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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Text:

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 01153

SIPDIS  
CXABU:

ACTION: POL  
INFO: PAO MEPI RSO AMB DCM P/M ECON

DISSEMINATION: POL  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MSISON  
DRAFTED: POL:RBASSIL  
CLEARED: POL:JFMAYBURY PA: HOLSIN-WINDECKER

VZCZCADI492  
RR RUEHC  
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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8677

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 001153

SIPDIS

STATE FOR G/IWI (L. KHADIAGALA)  
ALSO FOR DRL, NEA/PI, AND NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: ECON ELAB PHUM PGOV SCUL SOCI KWMN TC  
SUBJECT: CHILD MARRIAGE IN THE UAE

REF: STATE 36341

POST CONSULTED WITH THE UAE GENERAL WOMEN'S UNION (GWU), A GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED UMBRELLA WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION, ABOUT THE ISSUE OF CHILD MARRIAGE. FOLLOWING ARE POST'S RESPONSES TO REFTEL QUESTIONS REGARDING CHILD MARRIAGE IN THE UAE:

A) LEGAL AGE OF MARRIAGE: THE LEGAL AGE OF MARRIAGE IN THE UAE IS 18 YEARS FOR FEMALES AND 21 YEARS FOR MALES. THERE IS NO LOWER LEGAL AGE FOR MARRIAGE WITH PARENTAL CONSENT. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO GWU, UNDERAGE MARRIAGES TAKE PLACE, BUT THE DETERMINING FACTORS ARE THE MATURITY OF THE COUPLE AND PARENTAL CONSENT.

B) EXTENSION OF PROBLEM: ACCORDING TO GWU, UNDERAGE MARRIAGE IN THE UAE IS CURRENTLY NOT DEEMED TO BE A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM, AS IT HAS CONSIDERABLY DECLINED DUE TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY AND THE SPREAD OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN. GWU STATED THAT "LATE" MARRIAGE IS NOW THE TREND IN THE UAE AND THAT WOMEN OFTEN WAIT UNTIL THEY FINISH COLLEGE. THREE DECADES AGO, UAE NATIONALS, ESPECIALLY WOMEN, DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION, AND ACCORDING TO AN EMBASSY CONTACT WHO IS A RESEARCHER AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, GIRLS THEN WERE MARRIED AT THE AGE OF 13 AND BOYS AT THE AGE OF 16. ACCORDING TO GWU, CHILD MARRIAGE HAS NEGATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ON THE CHILD. THE PHYSICAL IMMATURITY OF GIRLS IS ALSO AN ADVERSE EFFECT.

C) U.S.-FUNDED INITIATIVES: THERE ARE NO CURRENT U.S.-FUNDED INITIATIVES IN THE UAE THAT AIM TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE, OR ADDRESS THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS, OF CHILD MARRIAGE. GWU, THROUGH ITS AFFILIATED WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AROUND THE EMIRATES, HAS ORGANIZED A NUMBER OF AWARENESS PROGRAMS ON THE ISSUE OF MARRIAGE, INCLUDING UNDERAGE MARRIAGE. THE UAE MARRIAGE FUND, AS WELL AS MATERNITY AND CHILD CENTERS, ALSO SPREAD AWARENESS ON THIS ISSUE. ANY U.S.-FUNDED INITIATIVE COULD BUILD ON THE EFFORTS ON THE GWU OR OTHER NGO'S.

SISON